

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly replace claims 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 20 and 21 with the following substitute claims. An Appendix showing all changes to these claims is attached to this amendment as required by 37 CFR §1.121(c).

C¹

1 1. (Twice amended) A granular or powdered detergent composition
2 having reduced di-salt formation, comprising:
3 first particles ester comprising C₁₆ or C₁₈ methyl ester sulfonate, wherein
4 the first particles are substantially free of substances that cause more than a minor amount
5 of additional disalt formation; and
6 second particles comprising nonionic surfactant and an additional
7 detergent components that cause more than a minor amount of additional di-salt
8 formation, the second particles having a free moisture content of less than about 6 weight
9 percent, the second particles being free of α -sulfofatty acid ester;
10 the first particles post-added to the second particles, whereby the first and
11 second particles are commingled, but remain separate and physically distinct.

C²

1 3. (Once amended) The composition of claim 2, wherein the α -sulfofatty
2 acid ester is a C₁₆ methyl ester sulfonate.

C³

1 5. (Twice amended) The composition of claim 1, wherein the second
2 particles further comprise a builder, a secondary anionic surfactant, a polymer dispersant,
3 an oxidizing agent, a biocidal agent, a foam regulator, a binder, an anticaking agent, an
4 activator, a catalyst, a thickener, a stabilizer, a fragrance, a soil suspending agent, a soil
5 release agent, a filler, a brightener, a UV protectant, an enzyme, or a mixture thereof.

C⁴

1 9. (Thrice amended) A granular or powdered α -sulfofatty acid ester
2 detergent composition, comprising:

3 detergent particles comprising at least one detergent component that
4 causes more than a minor amount of additional di-salt formation, and nonionic surfactant
5 selected from alkanolamide, polyalkoxylated alkanolamide, polyoxyalkylene alkyl ethers,
6 polyoxyalkylene alkylphenyl ethers, polyoxyalkylene sorbitan fatty acid esters,
7 polyoxyalkylene sorbitol fatty acid esters, polyalkylene glycol fatty acid esters, alkyl
8 polyalkylene glycol fatty acid esters, polyoxyethylene polyoxypropylene alkyl ethers,
9 polyoxyalkylene castor oils, polyoxyalkylene alkylamines, and glycerol fatty acid esters;
10 the second particles substantially free of α -sulfofatty acid ester; and
11 methyl ester sulfonate particles which are substantially free of substances
12 that cause more than a minor amount of additional disalt formation;
13 the methyl ester sulfonate particles ester post-added to the detergent
14 particles, whereby the methyl ester sulfonate particles and detergent particles are
15 commingled, but remain separate and physically distinct in the detergent composition,
16 and whereby additional di-salt formation is reduced.

C14
cont'd
1 10. (Twice amended) The composition of claim 9, wherein the methyl
2 ester sulfonate particles are a powder.

1 11. (Once amended) The composition of claim 9, wherein the methyl
2 ester sulfonate is sodium methyl ester sulfonate.

C05
1 13. (Twice amended) The composition of claim 9, wherein the detergent
2 particles further comprise a builder, a secondary anionic surfactant, a polymer dispersant,
3 an oxidizing agent, a biocidal agent, a foam regulator, a binder, an anticaking agent, an
4 activator, a catalyst, a thickener, a stabilizer, a fragrance, a soil suspending agent, a filler,
5 a brightener, a UV protectant, an enzyme, or a mixture thereof.

C06
1 16. (Twice amended) A granular or powdered α -sulfofatty acid ester
2 detergent prepared by:

3 providing at least one detergent component that causes more than a minor
4 amount of additional di-salt formation;
5 forming the at least one detergent component by granulating, spray drying
6 or agglomerating into detergent particles, the second particles free of α -sulfofatty acid
7 ester; and
8 post-adding a powdered or agglomerated methyl ester sulfonate to the
9 detergent portion so that the methyl ester sulfonate and detergent particles are
10 commingled, but remain separate and physically distinct; whereby the amount of the di-
11 salt formation is reduced.

C06
cont'd
1 17. (Thrice amended) The composition of claim 16, wherein the methyl
2 ester sulfonate is free of components that cause more than a minor amount of additional
3 di-salt formation.

1 20. (Once amended) The composition of claim 16, wherein the methyl
2 ester sulfonate is sodium methyl ester sulfonate.

C07
1 21. (Once amended) The composition of claim 16, further prepared by:
2 applying a coating to the methyl ester sulfonate.
